

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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## **Terry Goddard Warns of Fake Hurricane Katrina Charity Appeals**

(Phoenix, Ariz. – September 1, 2005) Attorney General Terry Goddard today warned Arizona residents to be on the watch for fraudulent Hurricane Katrina charity appeals.

One example is a letter claiming to be from a Tulane University student asking for financial support to help her get back on her feet. The letter said she lost everything but a change of clothes and having to fly back to Tucson put a huge financial strain on her family. The letter requests financial assistance.

"It didn't take long for the scam artists to emerge," Goddard said. "They come out every time there is a natural disaster of this size. I expect we will see more letters and fake appeals as the recovery proceeds. Scam artists prey on people's sympathy, and it is hard not to be moved when you see the devastating pictures out of Louisiana and Mississippi."

The Federal Trade Commission is reporting phishing emails being sent to people that look like a Red Cross email. These emails have the Red Cross logo and provide a link to what appears to be a Red Cross Web site.

Goddard offered the following tips when making donations to charities:

- Do not respond to any e-mail soliciting donations from the Red Cross or other charitable organizations. Visit the organization's Web site directly or call the organization to make donations.
- Be leery of appeals that play on emotion, but are short on describing what the charity will do to address the needs of victims and their families.
- If you contribute, do not give cash. Make out a check or money order to the name of the charitable organization, not to the individual soliciting the donation.
- Watch out for excessive pressure for on-the-spot donations. Be skeptical of any request to send someone in person to pick up a donation.
- Do not give your credit card number or other personal information to a telephone solicitor or in response to an email solicitation. Ask the caller or sender to send written information on the charity's programs and finances.
- Beware of charities that are reluctant to answer questions about their programs and budget. Ask how much of your gift will be used for relief efforts and how much will go to administrative costs and other programs.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763; in Tucson at 520.628.6504; or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. Consumers can also file complaints on line by visiting the Attorney General's Web site at [www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov).

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